"Balance of Plant" presumption of approval policy for safeguarded Indian facilities to include all non-NSG items. General Indian industry would benefit from more liberal and predictable U.S. policy on dual use technology export control.

Closing down of Visa Office by Singapore

1493. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Singapore Government has decided to close its Visa Office in Kolkata; and

(b) If so, whether Government would take up the matter with Singapore Government to stop such a move?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) Government ascertained that the Visa Office was opened in 1987 on a temporary basis and closed in 2004. Upon enquiry; Singapore has conveyed that should the need for a permanent visa processing office in Kolkata arise in future, Singapore would certainly give it due consideration. Opening or closing of the Visa Office is the sovererign decision of Singapore.

Chinese help to defuse Indo-Pak tension

1494. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether China had helped India to defuse Indo-Pak tension two years back as appeared in media;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's policy of defusing the tension between India and Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The Media reports referred to in this question are speculative and inaccurate. India's relations with Pakistan stand on their own and do not brook any third-party intervention.

(c) Government remains committed to establishment of peaceful, friendly and cooperative relations with Pakistan. Continuous efforts have been made

to intensify the ongoing process of confidence building, dialogue, and cooperation with Pakistan. One round of the Composite Dialogue (February-September 2004) was completed successfully. Wide ranging proposals for confidence building, promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields and enhancing commercial and economic relations were made by India. Both sides have been able to identify areas of convergence and future cooperation.

The process has been taken forward by high-level political contacts, including the meeting between Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Musharraf in New York on September 24, 2004; and regular interactions between External Affairs Minister Shri K. Natwar Singh and the Foreign Minister of Pakistan. The visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to New Delhi on November 23-24, in his capacity as the Chairperson of SAARC, also facilitated forward movement on the bilateral front. Government intends to continue with the dialogue process in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence.

The Government's Policy is that all outstanding issues have to be dealt with bilaterally as per the Shimla Agreement. There is no scope for any Third-party role or mediation.

Indo-ASEAN Conference

†1495. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of matters discussed during third Indo-ASEAN Conference;

(b) the details of issues raised by India; and

(c) the details of issues raised for peace and development and in what manner they would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) At the 3rd India-ASEAN Summit held in Vientiane, Loas on November 30, 2004 the leaders of India and ASEAN discussed international and regional issues as well as taking forward India-ASEAN cooperation in the economic sector, scientific and technological fields and people-to-people cooperation.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.